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through the tent and out at the further end. Before the voices of the choir had quite died away in the distance, a flourish of trumpets proclaimed the coming of the Crusaders, preceded by twenty marshals. These were in red tunics over which were tabards quartered in green and white with lions-rampant in white on the green quarterings and headcloths of steel. Then the Crusaders, in coats of mail and tunics of white with a red cross on the breast, or red with a white cross, according to the order to which they belonged. Some Crusaders had brought black slaves with them from the Holy Land, and these bore their shields for them in the procession. Having been drawn up before the queen by their leader, and having saluted her in the name of "St. George and Merrie England," the Crusaders (amid clamorous greetings and cheers) marched through the tent and back again to the edge of the wood, where the attendants brought them benches that they might be seated during the performance of a play and other festivities. Curtains were then drawn across, shutting off the wood for a moment, then drawn aside again, showing the wood once more, in which had been placed a small banquet table and two seats of the simplest description, this being the whole setting of the play.

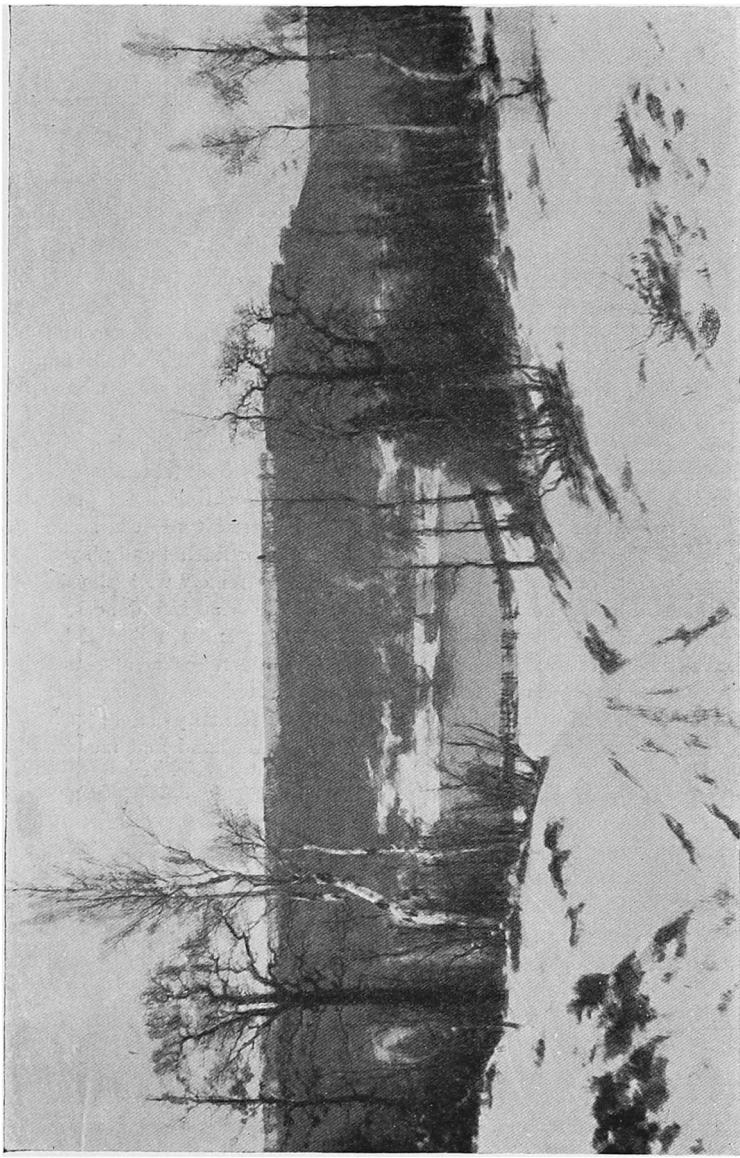
The play — Rosemonde ; a tragedy of the severest type, the scene being laid in Verona in the year 560 — was written for Rachel and played but once by her. It was given in French and extremely well played. Next came a hobby-horse tournament and some beautiful dances, a most graceful and dignified sarabande by knights and ladies, followed by characteristic dances by the peasants. Rigidly simple refreshments, such as "hot cross buns" and ale, were then distributed *ad libitum* from small handcarts, and at midnight the festival was formally closed, leaving the rest of the night to a nineteenth century brass band and modern dancing.

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PICTURESQUE ILLINOIS.

" We have no crags and turrets, no lakes nor rolling ocean,
The Boneyard is the only stream we know that is in motion ;
We're right here on the prairie, in the great old Prairie State,
And if you know a better one, we'll help you celebrate."

THUS sing the rollicking boys of the State University, and as I listened to them one evening not long ago, the mystery of that eternal, boundless prairie all came back to me, its majestic reach was again before my eyes. What an appeal there is in the early home scenes ! They become part of our very being, and, though far removed in the perspective of years and shadowed by the half-pictured confusion of later expe-



WINTER LANDSCAPE
BY SIMMONET
LUXEMBOURG GALLERY, PARIS

riences, they are, nevertheless, more real than the actualities about us. How potent they are when revived! What floodgates of vague bitter-sweet emotion they awaken!

After all, Champaign — the country of the plain — is nearest to me. Only on that ocean-like expanse do I feel myself quite at home. The sea is grand and impressive, but, shall I say it? I hate it as something living, for its selfish, murderous hunger, and its treacherous wiles; I am oppressed by its foolish, aimless surging, its purposeless come and go.



THE KICKAPOO, NEAR POTTSTOWN, ILLINOIS.

From photograph by Rudolph R. Bourland.

I think that I like mountains better — for a little while at a time. They always seem rather improbable, but make charming stage effects. Perhaps even a prairie boy could learn in time to take them seriously.

Of course they are beautiful, wondrously so, and make splendid canvases for the "Westering sun" to spread color upon, but somehow they soon irritate me; they are so self-conscious and insistent, or else so haughty and dumb. I'd rather discover humble beauties than have my admiration extorted; I do not like professional brilliant talkers!

Little fantastic mountains — two-year olds and "such" — are charm-

ing appetizers until you get enough of them. Then there is no escape, however; they are always there. Like a chatterbox girl, they keep right on, and you grow restless and nervous. But if they are big mountains, impressive and awful, it is still worse. For my part, there would be absolutely no living with them. I could not endure their silent presence. It would be like having that ghastly, paralyzed woman of the play at one's fireside all of the time. The strain would be too intense. Nature's sport is too rough, the rugged cliffs thrill one too strongly, and in the end they crush. Our ancestors used to take a sad



PENNINGTON CHURCH AND LIMESTONE CHURCHYARD.

From photograph by Rudolph R. Bourland.

pleasure in calling themselves worms of the dust, but who wants nowadays to be made to feel himself as insignificant as a bug or a gnat?

From the ocean and the White Mountains, with all their autumnal glories, I returned a couple of years ago to our own generous State, and, will you believe it, the sight of the broad, measureless plain won from me an unconscious sigh of relief. Here I could breathe again! How placid and ample it all is! How free and untrammeled one feels himself here! I never realized before how much early environment means to the man —

how true the philosophy of Ethel Newcomb when she exclaims, "We belong to our belongings." This monotonous prairie was as glad to my eyes as the mountains or the ocean to those born amid rocky heights or cradled by the music of a wind-swept sea. The very elements weave themselves into the fabric of our young lives. As I hastened westward, youth seemed to come back to me with the spreading horizon.

A recent visit to Peoria has awakened still earlier memories. I learned over again the fact that our State is not all an ocean-level prairie. I



A PASTORAL MOTIVE.
From photograph by Rudolph R. Bourland.

rediscovered the charm of the Illinois river. Here were no fretting crags, no burdening peaks, but something I found infinitely more to my taste. Why, that ride from Ottawa was as exquisite as music. It was an eighty-mile panorama of ever-changing beauty. Never in my life have I enjoyed nature more than upon that sunny winter afternoon. The snow-clad hills glittering in the glad light, the tender notes of distant leafless groves, the blue of the mirrored sky, the placid sweetness of the whole scene, gave me a pleasure which was not unmixed with pride.

Strange, was it not? here on this Illinois river bank I saw over and over again the almost perfect counterpart of my favorite painting in the Luxembourg Gallery, the landscape by Simmonet. I no longer marveled at the enthusiasm of my painter friends, Peyraud and Maratta, who spent a part of the summer near Peoria. "Why, we found subjects everywhere," they said. "It is all so beautiful." A few years ago our painters thought that they must cover big canvases, and tell all the facts of physical geography at once. Nothing less than Niagara Falls, or a whole mountain range satisfied their ambitious souls. The world moves, and we have learned something. Today the truly great artist contents himself with a more modest theme, and puts more of nature and of himself into it. He leaves topography to the mapmakers, and paints a shady country road, the golden glint of a harvest field, or violet shadows playing over the snow. The subject is less nowadays; the impression more. If the artist's sensitive taste has discovered beauty and his hand has had the cunning to translate and make it intelligible to us, it is enough; he has fulfilled his mission. The good people of our State need such interpreters; we live surrounded by beauty and scarce open our eyes. The Illinois river has themes for an army of painters. As soon as they find their way thither the world will be surprised at their discoveries as it was when Millet and Rousseau revealed the wonders of Barbizon. Peoria County is every whit as beautiful as the Forest of Fontainebleau. It is a question of but a few years when its winning charms will be pictured upon every exhibition wall.

LORADO TAFT.

